



TIFFANY STAR



An Official
HIWG Publication

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STAFF: Mike Mikesch and Ed Edwards.

TIFFANY STAR is a monthly amateur periodical published in support of the History of the Imperium Working Group (HIWG). The activities of HIWG are devoted to the development of the setting for Game Designers' Workshop's (GDW) science fiction role playing game of the far future, TRAVELLER. TRAVELLER is the registered trademark of GDW and is used with permission only. Portions of this periodical are derived from other TRAVELLER materials published by GDW or Digest Group Publications and are the copyright of the

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Illustrations and photo-ready articles are welcome. Send mail to Mike Mikesch, TIFFANY STAR, 3124 75th Ave #3, Landover MD 20785.

THUNDER FROM ABOVE

by Joe D. Fugate, Sr.

Purpose of HIWG

Genies: 7/14/90

The best thing HIWG can do for us if you want to make our job the easiest and get what you want (i.e., affect the official Traveller timeline) is for you author-types to take your best HIWG work and submit them to us as a publication-ready article. Follow our writer's guidelines and send us nice clean stuff.

The bottom line here is "if it gets published in the official press, THEN (and only then) is it official." From a purely business point of view, the fewer documents we have to search through, the easier our job is. We do this because we ENJOY making up history and background ourselves. Putting us in the position of compiler only robs us of the enjoyment of our work. In fact, Clay's efforts of compiling existing publications into useful summaries (and not really generating any new material per se) have been the most useful HIWG documents for us. Notice why: we can look at fewer documents.

We don't mind you all generating new background and history details -- have at it. I know it is fun! But unless you get the good stuff published, the cold reality of the situation is we are finding it is more hassle to have to search through official documents AND HIWG documents too. It is just plain easier for us to ignore the HIWG documents and make up our own background -- and more fun, too.

SO, is Joe on another "let's knock HIWG" binge? (Hello, Kate.) No, not really. I encourage you, plead with you, to follow the established channels in setting official background -- polish your writing up into a slick, professional sounding piece, and send it in for publication with a cover letter and a SASE (see our writer's guidelines for details). If we print it, then we HAVE to look at it when we do other products that involve the topic your now published piece covers.

We will not come looking for you. If you want to get published, you are going to have to do what everyone else does.

I will be waiting for those submissions!

—Joe Fugate, DGP

P.S. Not every HIWG document I have ever read is suitable for publication. I expect to receive only your BEST work. Don't be too surprised if some of your submissions get returned...

WHAT IN THE STARS

by Mike Mikesch

What's Official II

7/15/90

Joe -

Despite our encouragement, most HIWGs are not prepared to turn pro, for various reasons. (We'll still keep trying.) None the less, the amateurs have long desired a role in shaping the history, and have done so through their contributions to HIWG Docs.

Of course, I do NOT support the idea that DGP/GDW writers must remain true to HIWG Documents, and I don't think any HIWG officer holds this opinion either. Writers need freedom to do the job they're being paid to do, and should not be required to perform the unpleasant task of compiling HIWG works.

Rather, the point of HIWG Docs is to offer suggestions and fill in gaps, not supplant the creative license given the writers. And I do believe the ideas presented in HIWG essays have substantial merit. These were put together by people that have given YEARS of thought to various aspects of the rebellion. A writer assigned to a project might have more eloquent skills in writing. But in many cases, he probably has not given the rebellion area he is dealing with the same depth of thought and consideration as particular folks in HIWG.

HIWG analysts have worked to become, in effect, experts in their areas. They've studied the existing literature and examined closely the facets and nuances belonging to their factions and sectors. In my opinion, this makes them very good people to consult and their essays should be given attention.

By "attention" I don't mean you sift through the whole library of HIWG Docs. We can take responsibility to send to the writers what pertains to their projects as long as we are kept informed of what they are doing.

From its inception, I (and probably Ed) saw HIWG's purpose as opening a channel between amateurs and writers. The channel gets clogged, but we try to improve the system. (Suggestions are encouraged.)

We still want to make this work if only for the benefits this offers to the quality of Traveller products. So, I earnestly ask that you reopen the door to amateur input.



HIWG CHAIRSOPHONT LETTER

by Ed Edwards

Dear Fellow TRAVELLER:

GENie: 7/16/90

Files of pericious paper perpetually purloin my precious progress! Where is that piece of paper that will remind me of Clay's summary of Bryan's comments on Mike's analysis of Don's changes to James' conclusions about Dennis' observations of Duncan's ideas concerning the paper Kevin wrote?

Remember the good old days of fanzines when good words were retyped as each reader passed on the good word? If you were lucky you got the typed page instead of the third carbon. Then the home computer print-out and the corner copy shop came along. Suddenly for under \$10 you can send 12 people a copy of your 16 page letter.

We are now beyond the age of paper passing. I'm working with the Data Editor, Bryan Borich to develop a system whereby as many people as possible can get their HIWG documents into the appropriate Quadrant Editor in electronic form. Those fortunate to have enough money to afford not only a computer but a hook-up to GENie as well, are already aware of the power present to influence the direction of TRAVELLER.

TDBP UNION HIWG

Leif Pihl is the Director of the TRAVELLER Data Base Project (TDBP). Some of you may recall the TDBP from JOURNAL #22 (GDW,85). Leif has now joined HIWG with the interest of reviving the TDBP. TDBP is one of those many projects I started and then abandoned (I'm better at starting things than finishing them). Now the monkey is on Leif's back — TDBP is what Leif says it is. However, I'm always one to kibitz.

TDBP is an effort to get TRAVELLER "facts" on electronic media. Leif tends to desire all TRAVELLER data on electronic media — I'd rather see significant data, indices to the data, usable groupings of data. TRAVELLER borders on having too much data — and TDBP is one of the efforts to get it into manageable form. TDBP focuses on getting known TRAVELLER facts in electronic form — the cutting edge of HIWG focuses on creating new TRAVELLER facts and now: putting them in electronic form.

JOE BASHING

Official HIWG policy: no Joe bashing.

Joe works for a living just like us HIWGs. Joe does TRAVELLER in his spare time for fun just like we are supposed to do.

Joe has supported HIWG with FREE ads in TRAVELLER'S DIGEST (not to mention the nifty plug in TD20). No rational motive that can be assigned to Joe is anti-HIWG. (By the way — assigning motives to others will usually get one in trouble — just look at the actions, not the motives). Joe is a GOB (good ol' boy)!

Most of the ill things said about Joe are really my fault. Have I even made a list of the HIWG Docs in the past year? (for you who were asleep the last year, the answer is NO)? The HIWG chairsophont cannot even read all the HIWG docs and we expect Joe to remember everything in them? Our HIWG historian, Clay Bush, is going to make an up to date list — if I can encourage him to do so.

PROBLEMS IN CAMELOT?

The fact is, some TRAVELLER designers have left HIWG because HIWG gets in their way working with the professional press. The idea the founders of HIWG had

was that there were a lot of new ideas for TRAVELLER. The delay between the when one designer notes a particular TRAVELLER "fact" and the time it is published and becomes an official fact allows for conflicts. How do we avoid conflicting facts? One method is to totally reject facts that conflict — at the point of acceptance/non-acceptance of a complete article by the professional press. This is four to six months after the designer writes it down. HIWG at first, by using the vehicle of TIFFANY STAR, was able to present these new ideas so that other writers could either argue which was most correct or find out within a couple of months that their idea was being conflicted.

HIWG appointed faction and sector analysts who were supposed to be consulted before designing new ideas in their area. The sheer volume of new material quickly precluded printing all developments in TS. But the HIWG Docs on paper helped that — you could "buy" the developments related to what you were doing and check up to see if you were duplicating some one else's effort.

What I have done in the last year is to divide my job among several Quadrant Editors (QE). The QE interact with the Faction Analysts (FA) and Sector Analysts (SA) in their area of responsibility, appoint and remove FAs and SAs as necessary. Thus I no longer look at each and every HIWG document that is created — but instead work with the QEs on general HIWG policy and concepts. (Not that I totally ignore anybody with a idea on how to improve the concept and operations of HIWG.)

These QEs theoretically have time to check each contributors design to make sure that people are not designing similar (i.e. conflicting) information.

The possibility that GDW may print some TRAVELLER based books only compounds the problem. It may take as much as two years from the time a designer creates a TRAVELLER "fact" and the time that it is published and made and official fact. Two years of time is an enormous investment in time and labor only to have your final work rejected because it contains untrue "facts".

DGP KUDOS

Next issue of TRAVELLER'S DIGEST (TD) will mark the completion of the grand tour of the Imperium by the TD group of PCs. This is astounding! No other TRAVELLER licensee has lasted as long as DGP. Those that were successful business-wise got out of the TRAVELLER business (example: FASA); those that were otherwise just disappeared after a time.

Now the successful DGP is going to end TRAVELLER'S DIGEST (TD) at volume 21 and continue right on into THE MEGATRAVELLER JOURNAL (TMJ). In so doing they will concentrate on the Domain of Deneb (DoD). Well, as it happens, the DoD was one place in Charted Space where HIWG was forbidden to operate. This seems to make HIWG's purposes and TMJ's purposes to no longer travel in exactly the same direction. Fortunately there is still the CHALLENGE outlet. News from ORIGINS indicates that Gary Thomas of DGP will be editing or coordinating the MT section of CHALLENGE. This gives a ready outlet of HIWGian fervor to the professional press. I also hear rumors that the MT section of CHALLENGE is to increase to 25 pages each and every issue of CHALLENGE — there will be room for goodly portions of HIWGian effort there.

Joe has established a rather efficient network of TD contributors who work almost exclusively on GENie. But when I look around I find at least one-third of the HIWGs cannot get on GENie (those on ships at sea and in non-GENie serviced places) — these should not be summarily booted out of HIWG and will not. No, Bryan Borich has a better idea: maximize the use of the mailed disk. This development continues.

HIWG TOOTS IT'S HORN

Officers of HIWG are:

Ed Edwards -- Chairsophont

In charge of HIWG policy, an inspiration to all, and chief tail kicker.

Quadrant Editors:

Q1: Clay Bush Q3: Don McKinney
Q2: Mike Mikes Q4: Dennis Myers

Quadrant Editors (QEs) "hire" and fire Faction Editors and Sector Analysts, Maintain lists of HIWG Documents for circulation to HIWGs at 12 cents per page; examine HIWG Docs to assure that parallel conflicting lines of development are not being undertaken.

Duncan Law-Green -- Vland Domain Editor

Performs functions similar to the QEs (but has no paper documents for distribution - Clay does it for him).

Kevin Parry -- HIWG UK

Provides coordination (mostly Pounds to Dollars) between the UK and the US. Also acts in the stead of the HIWG Chairsophont in the UK.

Bryan Borich -- Data Coordinator

Is establishing inter-computer type conversion of HIWG docs on disk.

James Holden -- QEEP

HIWG Hyper-editor for special projects, organizes temporary groups for passing projects of HIWG.

There are about a dozen active faction analysts and two dozen active sector analysts in HIWG. HIWG now has about 80 members receiving the TIFFANY STAR. Other active fanzines circulating in HIWG DOCS are: AAB PROCEEDINGS (edited by Clay Bush for Q1), RIMSHOTS (edited by Dennis Myers for Q4), and STARPORT (edited by Kevin Parry for the UK and for the Atari ST computer).

A fanzine type organizations is associated with HIWG: T-TECH, Technologies for TRAVELLER, edited by Phil Athans. His documents are circulated as HIWG Documents. Two roleplaying fanzines contain HIWG material and are edited by HIWGs: TERRA TRAVELLER TIMES, edited by Geo Gelinas, containing data about the Diaspora Sector; and GAMER'S FORUM, edited by Don McKinney, containing Quadrant Three material. Both these fanzines are available by subscription separate from HIWG membership.

HIWG - Enhancing The TRAVELLER Adventure!

Ed Edwards, HIWG Chairsophont

NEW HIWG DOCUMENTS

Order Number: HD-0D10 STARPORT #10 by Kevin Parry.
3 pages Kevin replaces David Lai as the HIWG UK Representative. Kevin has insight on copyrights and documentation standards. Kevin winds ST10 up with interesting personal data. This HIWG Doc will appear on the HIWG Disks next upgrade. It is available right now at 12 cents per page from Ed Edwards.

Order Number: HD-100.01 Point-based Character Generation by Don McKinney. An alternate method of character generation featuring controlled development along desired paths. Points are allocated for the UPP characteristics, aging, service, skills, service ranks, and benefits. This system can be adapted readily to the advancement of characters generated by the regular method. This document available for 12 cents per page from Ed.

Order Number: HD-100.02 More Skills for MEGATRAVELLER
4 pages by Don McKinney. Eighteen new skills to be added to the basic skills of MT. Skills included are Cryonics, Meteorology, Logistics, and others. Don also discusses xenological dimensions of skills. This document available for 12 cents per page from Ed.

Order Number: HD-100.03 More Character Generation Options by Don McKinney. Don suggests skill table modifications (minor). He discusses the meaning of each skill level from 0 to 5. Don delineates a method for multiple service selection. This document available for 12 cents per page from Ed.

ASLAN HISTORY (Part I)

by Mike Mikes and Tim Brown

Tim Brown wrote a short draft of the Aslan history before leaving GDM. In recent weeks, I rewrote and expanded it into a rather large document in preparation for MTA42. I'll start including this in TS (whatever I can fit in). As things come in from other authors, though, I might give those priority, or even tag on an extra leaf. Your feedback is welcome and most encouraged. -MM

As a race, Aslan are naturally more acclimated to and capable of violence and killing than humans. Our history clearly shows this to be true, as hundreds of terrible clan wars nearly wiped out our race before it was even capable of venturing off of Kusyu. To keep our race from annihilating itself, our species adopted a number of cultural conventions designed to keep the peace among individuals and clans. It is only these conventions that allowed us to overcome our nature and eventually aspire to the stars to become one of the Major Races. Otherwise human explorers would have no doubt found a scorched world and mysterious dead civilization on Kusyu, simply another race that fell into the trap of self-extinction.

PREHISTORY

Our anthropologists believe that the Aslan originated in the southern, coastal regions of the Tafolti continent on Kusyu. There, the highly intelligent carnivores flourished amid the teeming forests, putting themselves at the top of the complicated food chain of Kusyu's ancient wilderness.

As forest hunters, this period of Aslan evolutionary history saw two major changes in the Aslan form. First, our ancestors developed our more upright stance in order to see over the underbrush in search of prey. Second, they developed manipulative hands to aid in hunting tree dwellers.

Simple hands at first allowed them to shake and bend branches while in trees, causing prey to fall and lay stunned. Hands also sometimes allowed the Aslan to grab an animal from a limb. From this beginning, improvements of the hand, intelligence, and hand-eye coordination yielded steadily increasing rewards.

Anthropologists speculate that cooperative hunting began in this time and also played a role in the development of the Aslan hand. In climber/catcher pairs, a hunter on the ground would wait to kill fallen animals before they could escape. But as big as Aslan were, they often could not turn and pounce quickly enough. Eventually, evolution reduced this to but a one arm motion. The catcher could snatch the prey out of mid-flight, kill it with the dew claw, drop it, and be ready for the next to fall. In the mean time, the second arm was always at the ready.

At any rate, our highly evolved hands fell into disuse to quietly await the dawn of tool use. Sudden climatic changes caused the forested paradise to

dwindle. The process was so rapid, it forced our ancestors onto the expanding grassland plains faster than adaptation would allow. Extinction loomed as we entered this crucial juncture in our developing history.

Fossil records indicate that developing Aslan of this stage preyed largely on grassland herd animals. At that time, these fell into either of two general types. The first consisted of fast animals, much smaller than the early Aslan. Certainly the hunters found these animals more trouble than they were worth, yielding few calories of meat for the effort involved catching them. The second group consisting mainly of enormous grazing animals, slow moving and easily tracked, but far too large to be brought down by a single Aslan hunter.

Also, the plains already were host to a plethora of indigenous carnivores, many of which were more than a match for the intruding Aslan. Only cooperative hunting and intelligence gave those early generations a slim fighting edge on the plains. Increasingly complex forms of cooperation quickly developed, improving their ability to survive, and the foundations for all of Aslan civilization and culture were born.

In its most primitive form, the Aslan ahriy, or pride, was a simple union of several (three to eight generally) families. The strongest male, as determined by personal, deadly combat, would be the leader of the ahriy. If combat proved fatal, the loser's females would either become the property of the victor or, if not accepted by the victor's other females, would be turned out of the ahriy to either hunt independently or to join another ahriy. Privileges of the leader's family included receiving the best parts of kills, first choice of sleeping places, and first drink at watering holes. Also, it was the responsibility of the leader's female hunters to keep track of the large grazer herds and lead the way during their many migrations.

These hunters took careful note of the habits and patterns of their prey so as to anticipate their movements. It did not take them long to recognize the animals were very much tied to the foods they ate. Although the grasses provided a staple, the herds often travelled from one grove or patch to another to supplement their diet.

Our first step toward agriculture occurred when early Aslan started manipulating the herds by manipulating the plants. The females learned to burn out the patches where they did not want herds to go. But they also scattered seeds to grow new patches in locations that made their hunting easier.

Over time, females devised increasingly sophisticated techniques. By carefully grooming the land, they learned to control the animal migrations and better support the preferred herds. They were even able to control the birth rates in the herds and minimize the threat of disease. The use of passive techniques was especially effective on Kusyu because of its particular ecology.

Also in this time, early Aslan took up active herding, keeping their best herds on the range while the rest migrated to weather the less temperate seasons. While females learned animal husbandry, males took to riding the great beasts. Mounts proved useful in herding and hauling loads, but also in hunting down large predators and in battles against other ahriy. Cavalry was always an important element in our war science.

Although we learned land management quite early, true agriculture did not come until our populations were more numerous. As prime land became scarce, competition for it grew fierce. Losers in the struggles were forced into poorer territories or smaller areas. These had to expand on known techniques to make the land productive enough to support their herds. This led them directly into agriculture.

Unfortunately, the spread of new methods was slow,

requiring their reinvention in almost every case. The solitary nature of the ahriy restrained the sharing of knowledge. The only means of exchanging information from one ahriy to another was through the natural transfer to young, unmarried females. These often had too little experience to be of value.

By -1100 Aslan (roughly -3050 Imperial) the Aslan had evolved both physically and mentally to a point where organized civilization was inevitable. Our ancestors numbered over one million at that time, which, for a predatory race with virtually no understanding of technology beyond early metalworking, is tantamount to overpopulation.

KTEAHIHURKO AND THE FIRST AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Our Ieakhtefu period, which can be translated as the First Age of Enlightenment, was at first a very shaky one. The archaeological work pioneered by Ktyalrehtoaw in -320 Aslan (-2381 Imperial) and continued for several centuries after her death conclusively proved the existence of more than a dozen failed Aslan clan communities on the Tafolti plains. Those early clans that did form, from a number of ahriy under the leadership of one dominant male, brought together the innovations of hundreds of females, but at the same time forced on the males a way of life that flew in the face of their solitary, land-dominating nature. Before this time there was no concept of a landless male, or awkhtau, and the vassalage of the lowest classes of males did not go down easily. This early class struggle was the chief deterrent to civilization of the age, and only time and bloody conflict saw the awkhtau become a permanent fixture of Aslan culture.

With the growth of the clans and their lands came contact with other clans, and, without fail, war. Organized warfare between the clans' males forced the Aslan race into some of its bloodiest years. The male drive for land acquisition necessitated combat, and Aslan personal combat is swift and usually fatal. Even when population pressures were still relatively low our ancestors grappled with each other in lengthy wars that halted and in some cases reversed progress, and created some complicated patterns of vassalage that can still be seen today.

Kteahihurko the Wise is credited with being the first peacemaker between the clans. Instead of going to war with the neighboring Ftahiluiru clan over a grudge, Kteahihurko proposed the first limited conflict as a means of settlement.

Ftahiluiru, having just finished another war, was weaker at the time. But Kteahihurko was not moved by a sense of compassion (that in an Aslan male would be a sign of insanity). Rather, there was probably a need for the Kteahihur clan to conserve its strength in the face of its many neighbors. Kteahihurko's treatment of the Ftahiluiru clan is attributed as an act of honor. For that, the Kteahihur and Ftahiluiru clans eventually became fast allies and in time dominated all their neighbors.

Others also began following this example when faced with insult and unable to pay the price of a full scale war. This spread, and after but a few generations became an integral part of Aslan culture. Major wars still occurred. But limited wars, and eventually even bloodless contests, relieved society of the unrestrained bloodshed and destruction. Thus unburdened, our technology was allowed to move on from its humble beginnings.

The Ieakhtefu lasted for nearly eight hundred years, during which time technology advanced from Imperial tech level 1 to roughly tech level 5 or 6. During all that time, no single clan gained a dominant position over all of Kusyu, though about two dozen clans held absolute power within their own distinct regions.